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RETAIL PRICES AND BASIC WAGE RATES - SEPTEMBER QUARTER, 1964

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX

The Consumer Price Index measures quarterly, for each State Capital, the variations in prices of commodities and services as affecting a high proportion of the expenditure of wage-earner households. Commodities and services included in the index are food, clothing, drapery, home ownership, rent of privately owned and government owned houses, fuel, light, furniture, household appliances and supplies, fares, motoring, tobacco, cigarettes, beer, cinema, radio and television licences, newspapers, postal and telephone services, hairdressing, dry cleaning, and various other items.

The various commodities and services have been combined into groups and group indexes are available for Food, Clothing and Drapery, Housing, Household Supplies and Equipment, and Miscellaneous.

The indexes measure price movements in each city individually. They do not provide a comparison of the retail price level in any city with the retail price level of any other city. The base of the index for each city and for the weighted average, six State Capitals, is year 1952-53 = 100.0. Group indexes also have separate bases for each group.

The Brisbane Consumer Price Index for September quarter, 1964, was 131.9 compared with 130.2 for the previous quarter, an increase of 1.3 per cent. Although a similar percentage increase was recorded for March quarter, 1961, this quarterly rate of increase has not been exceeded since September quarter, 1956, when the index rose by 2.2 per cent for the quarter. The increase for the year ended September, 1964, was 2.7 per cent.

Food prices increased for a number of items during the quarter and resulted in an increase of 1.4 per cent for the Food Group index. The September quarter index number for the Group was 138.0 compared with 136.1 for the previous quarter. The principal food items for which higher prices were recorded were potatoes, meat, butter, processed meats and soft drinks. On the other hand price decreases were recorded for eggs and onions.

The Clothing and Drapery Group index for the quarter rose from 118.4 to 118.8. This increase of 0.3 per cent was mainly attributable to increases for some items of men's clothing and also footwear.

The Housing Group index increased by 1.2 per cent from 145.4 to 147.2. The increase was mainly due to higher Local Government rates and charges.

There was no change during the quarter for the Household Supplies and Equipment Group, the index number remaining at 112.3.

There was a substantial increase of 2.4 per cent for the Miscellaneous Group index. The index number was 138.6 for September quarter compared with 135.3 for the previous quarter. The index increase was principally due to higher prices for tobacco, cigarettes, motoring, hairdressing, dry cleaning and shoe repairs.

The Consumer Price Index increased in all State Capitals from June quarter to September quarter, 1964. Percentage variations were as follows:- Adelaide, +1.4; Brisbane, +1.3; Sydney and Hobart, +1.2; Melbourne and Perth, +1.0. The weighted average of the six State Capitals showed an increase of 1.2 per cent.

Since the base year, 1952-53, the rise in the retail price level has been greatest in Brisbane and smallest in Perth. Percentage increases from 1952-53 to September quarter, 1964, were as follows:- Brisbane, 31.9; Hobart, 31.7; Melbourne, 29.6; Sydney, 27.3; Adelaide, 26.9; and Perth, 26.6. The rise in the weighted average for the six State Capitals was 28.5 per cent. (It should be noted that these figures merely indicate rates of price rise in separate cities, and do not represent in any way the relative absolute price levels in the different cities.)

COMMONWEALTH AND STATE BASIC WAGE RATES

Commonwealth and State basic wage rates are reviewed by the appropriate Industrial Authorities from time to time. The last variation made by the Commonwealth Conciliation and Arbitration Commission was an addition of £1 to the male basic wage, with corresponding adjustments to the female and juvenile rates, and operated from 19th June, 1964.

The Queensland Industrial Conciliation and Arbitration Act of 1961 abolished automatic quarterly reviews of the State basic wage, but the Industrial Commission was empowered to vary the wage after a general hearing on the applications of interested parties. Following such applications the Commission increased the basic wage by 4s. for males and 3s. for females as from 29th May, 1961; and by 2s. for males and 1s. 6d. for females as from 6th May, 1963. A further increase of 14s. for males and 10s. 6d. for females was granted from 13th July, 1964.

Current Commonwealth and State basic wage rates are shown in the following table.

Basic Wage Rates - State Capital Cities

Capital City	Commonwealth Basic Wage			State Basic Wage		
	Males	Females	Date of Operation ^a	Males	Females	Date of Operation
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.		£ s. d.	£ s. d.	
Brisbane ..	14 10 0	10 17 6	19.6.64	15 0 0	11 5 0	13. 7.64
Sydney ..	15 15 0	11 16 0	19.6.64	15 15 0	11 16 0	19. 6.64a
Melbourne ..	15 7 0	11 10 0	19.6.64	15 7 0	11 10 0	June, 64b
Adelaide ..	15 3 0	11 7 0	19.6.64	15 3 0	11 7 0	22. 6.64a
Perth ..	15 8 0	11 11 0	19.6.64	15 11 2c	11 13 5c	26.10.64
Hobart ..	15 14 0	11 15 6	19.6.64	15 14 0	11 15 6	June, 64b

a From the first pay period commencing on or after the date shown.

b Most Wages Boards adopted the Commonwealth rate during June, 1964.

c Following a general hearing the Arbitration Court fixed the basic wage at £15.8.0 for males and £11.11.0 for females, payable from 22nd September, 1964. The current rates were fixed after the release of the Consumer Price Index for September quarter, 1964.

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Table 1 - Consumer Price Index - Total and Group Indexes - Brisbane
(Year 1952-53 = 100.0)

Period	Food	Clothing and Drapery	Housing	Household Supplies and Equipment	Miscell- aneous	All Groups
Year -						
1954-55	104.1	101.3	104.7	102.5	102.0	102.9
1955-56	107.7	102.2	110.5	102.6	108.0	106.3
1956-57	111.5	104.7	118.4	106.5	118.9	112.0
1957-58	113.0	107.8	123.9	108.3	120.5	114.4
1958-59	119.8	109.4	128.4	109.0	123.6	118.2
1959-60	124.2	111.9	132.6	110.6	125.6	121.2
1960-61	130.4	115.1	137.6	111.3	129.5	125.4
1961-62	130.8	116.7	140.5	113.0	133.3	127.3
1962-63	129.8	117.0	144.0	112.8	134.4	127.7
1963-64	133.1	117.8	145.2	111.7	135.2	129.0
Quarter -						
1963 - September ..	131.5	117.4	145.1	111.2	135.2	128.4
December ..	131.0	117.6	145.0	111.5	135.0	128.2
1964 - March ..	133.6	117.7	145.2	111.7	135.4	129.2
June ..	136.1	118.4	145.4	112.3	135.3	130.2
September ..	138.0	118.8	147.2	112.3	138.6	131.9
Percentage Increase or Decrease (-) on Previous Quarter						
Quarter -						
1963 - September ..	1.0	0.3	0.4	-1.5	0.6	0.4
December ..	-0.4	0.2	-0.1	0.3	-0.1	-0.2
1964 - March ..	2.0	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.8
June ..	1.9	0.6	0.1	0.5	-0.1	0.8
September ..	1.4	0.3	1.2	-	2.4	1.3

Table 2 - Consumer Price Index - State Capital Cities
(Year 1952-53 = 100.0 for Each City and for Six State Capitals)

As the base for each city is 100.0, the indexes in the table below do not indicate relative price levels as between cities, but they may be used to compare relative price movements in the various cities.

Period	Sydney	Melbourne	Brisbane	Adelaide	Perth	Hobart	Weighted Average Six State Capitals
Year -							
1954-55	102.3	102.0	102.9	103.5	105.2	104.9	102.6
1955-56	105.7	108.1	106.3	106.9	107.9	110.2	106.9
1956-57	112.9	114.0	112.0	111.1	112.9	116.9	113.1
1957-58	114.5	114.4	114.4	111.9	113.6	117.0	114.2
1958-59	115.3	116.6	118.2	114.5	114.7	118.7	116.0
1959-60	117.8	120.0	121.2	118.0	116.9	120.8	118.9
1960-61	122.1	125.9	125.4	122.9	121.2	127.5	123.8
1961-62	122.6	126.3	127.3	122.5	121.6	128.1	124.3
1962-63	123.2	126.2	127.7	122.1	122.2	128.0	124.5
1963-64	124.5	127.1	129.0	123.5	123.8	129.4	125.7
Quarter -							
1963 - September	123.7	126.7	128.4	122.8	122.7	128.8	125.1
December ..	123.9	126.4	128.2	122.7	123.1	129.0	125.0
1964 - March ..	124.6	127.1	129.2	123.5	124.2	129.8	125.8
June ..	125.8	128.3	130.2	125.1	125.3	130.1	127.0
September	127.3	129.6	131.9	126.9	126.6	131.7	128.5